amar chitra katha

No. 11 Rs.4.00

KRISHNA



THE CHILDHOOD OF THE EIGHTH AVATAR OF VISHNU

Krishna is the most endearing and ennobling character in Indian mythology. He is at once the common cowherd engaging the milk-maids in playful banter and the supreme intellectual engaged in the exposition of the Gita philosophy.

Krishna has a particular appeal for children because he is one of them as no other divine is. Krishna the boy is mischievous; he is naughty. He has irrepressible energy for innumerable escapades. He is no prig; he is no puritan. He has divine powers. But he humanises them and remains a boy. This powerful human element is the secret of Krishna's universal popularity. He is secular even as he is sacred, and so he remains throughout his life. That is why Krishna becomes a living presence to all children who have listened to the stories about him.

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KRISHNA
VASUDEVA, A NOBLEMAN, HAD MARRIED PRINCESS DEVAKI OF MATHURA. HE WAS TAKING HIS BRIDE HOME.
DEVAKI'S COUSIN, PRINCE KAMSA, WAS DRIVING THE CHARIOT. HE WAS CRUEL AND THE PEOPLE FEARED HIM.
IT'S KAMSA! RUN!
HA! LOOK AT THEM RUN, VASUDEVA!
JUST THEN A HEAVENLY VOICE WAS HEARD.
KAMSA, YOU SHALL SOON DIE. THE EIGHTH CHILD BORN TO DEVAKI WILL SLAY YOU!
IF SHE LIVES TO HAVE THAT EIGHTH CHILD! I'LL SLAY HER BEFORE THEN!
KAMSA! DON'T!



YOUR SISTER HAS DONE YOU NO HARM, KAMSA. AS FOR THE CHILDREN WHO ARE YET TO BE BORN, I SHALL GIVE EACH ONE TO YOU, THE MOMENT IT IS BORN. I PROMISE.
I'LL SPARE DEVAKI, BUT I'LL MAKE SURE THAT YOU KEEP YOUR WORD.
KAMSA CONFINED DEVAKI AND VASUDEVA IN A PALACE. HE VISITED THEM EVERY TIME A BABY WAS BORN.
DEVAKI, GIVE ME THE BABY.
NO!
STOP HIM, MY LORD!
I AM HELPLESS, DEVAKI!
THUS DID THE COUPLE LOSE SIX OF THEIR CHILDREN. WHEN THE SEVENTH ONE WAS ABOUT TO BE BORN—
WE MUST TRY AND SAVE THIS CHILD, DEVAKI.
FROM THAT TYRANT, KAMSA? WE WILL NEVER SUCCEED.


WHO WILL HELP US? WHO WILL DARE RAISE A FINGER AGAINST ONE WHO HAS IMPRISONED HIS OWN FATHER?
YES. KING UGRASENA'S PLIGHT IS NO BETTER THAN OURS.
BUT DON'T LOSE HEART. REMEMBER THE PROPHECY.
THE SEVENTH CHILD WAS MIRACULOUSLY CARRIED TO ROHINI, VASUDEVA'S SECOND WIFE, IN GOKUL.
AND KAMSA WAS TOLD THAT DEVAKI'S BABY WAS STILL-BORN.
GOOD. THE NEXT WILL BE THE EIGHTH ONE — THE SLAYER OF MIGHTY KAMSA. HA!
PRADYOTA, HAVE VASUDEVA AND DEVAKI PUT IN CHAINS.



* RECKONED AS THE MONTH OF BHADRAPAD, IN NORTH INDIA


HOW I LONG TO HOLD MY SON... BUT... THESE CHAINS...
SUDDENLY—
LOOK! THE CHAINS HAVE FALLEN OFF.
AND THE DOORS HAVE OPENED! IT'S A MIRACLE!
DEVAKI! QUICK! GIVE THE CHILD TO ME.
I'LL TAKE HIM TO OUR FRIEND, NANDA, IN GOKUL.
AND VASUDEVA WALKED PAST THE GUARDS WHO HAD FALLEN ASLEEP.


GOKUL WAS ON THE OPPOSITE BANK OF THE RIVER YAMUNA WHICH WAS THEN IN SPATE.
AS VASUDEVA APPROACHED, HOWEVER, THE WATERS PARTED...
... AND VASUDEVA WALKED TOWARDS GOKUL.


AS HE NEARED GOKUL —
AH! THE CRY OF A NEW-BORN BABY. IT COMES FROM NANDA'S HOUSE..
NANDA'S WIFE YASHODA HAS HAD A CHILD.
IT'S A GIRL!
AND SURELY KAMSA WOULD NOT KILL A BABY GIRL.
SO VASUDEVA LEFT HIS EIGHTH CHILD IN NANDA'S HOUSE AND CARRIED THE BABY GIRL TO MATHURA.
THE CHILD IS QUIET, AND THE GUARDS ARE STILL ASLEEP.


AS SOON AS VASUDEVA ENTERED THE PALACE, THE DOORS CLOSED. MINUTES LATER—
DID YOU HEAR THAT? IT'S THE WAIL OF A NEW-BORN BABY!
OOAH! OOAH!
COME! LET'S REPORT THIS TO THE KING!
THE EIGHTH CHILD! I WILL BE THERE IN A MOMENT.
WHEN KAMSA REACHED THE PALACE—
SPARE THE BABY, KAMSA. WHAT HARM CAN A GIRL DO YOU?
IGNORING HIM, KAMSA SEIZED THE BABY BY ITS LEGS AND WAS ABOUT TO DASH IT TO THE GROUND WHEN...
...IT ESCAPED FROM HIS GRIP AND FLEW TOWARDS THE SKY.
THEN—
THE ONE WHO SHALL DESTROY YOU STILL LIVES!

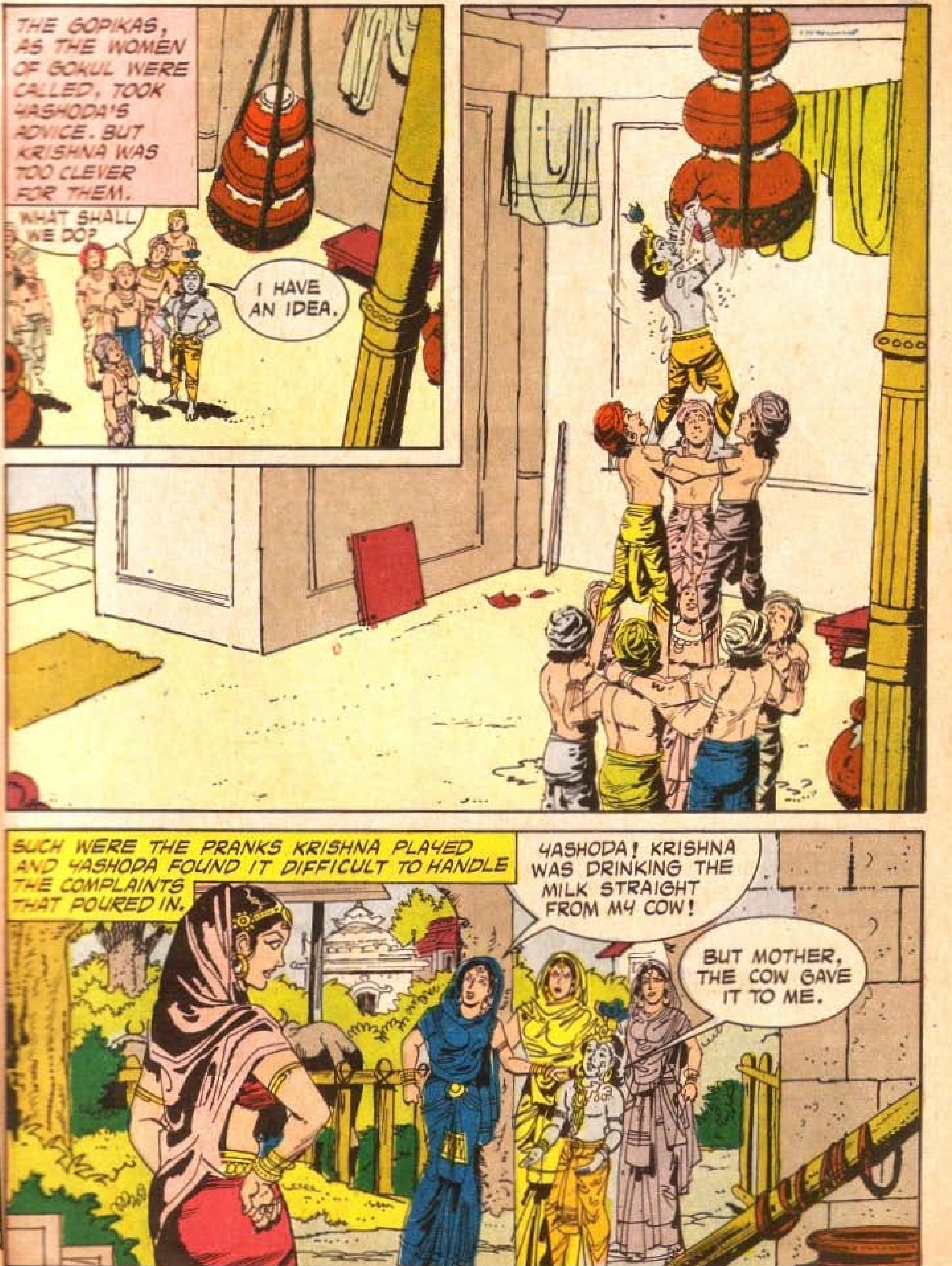

THE NEXT DAY, IN GOKUL—
THEY SAY THAT NANDA'S SON IS VERY BEAUTIFUL.
YES. AND HE HAS A BEAUTIFUL NAME TOO— KRISHNA!
KAMSA SET DEVAKI AND VASUDEVA FREE. HOWEVER, HE WANTED TO TRACE THE EIGHTH CHILD. SO HE SENT FOR THE WICKED PUTANA.
PUTANA! GO OUT AND KILL EVERY CHILD BORN IN THE MONTH OF SHRAVAN!
PUTANA WENT ABOUT HER EVIL TASK.
I'LL SMEAR MY BREASTS WITH POISON AND FEED THE BABIES.
WHAT A SWEET BABY! MAY I HOLD IT?
THE MOTHER WAS FLATTERED. SHE GAVE THE BABY TO PUTANA.
A FEW MINUTES LATER—
MY BABY! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY BABY? AND WHERE IS PUTANA?


PUTANA HAD MADE HER WAY TO GOKUL!
WHO IS THAT BOY? WHEN WAS HE BORN?
HE IS KRISHNA, THE SON OF NANDA. HE WAS BORN IN THE MONTH OF SHRAVAN.
WHEN PUTANA FOUND KRISHNA ALONE—
LATER—
WHERE IS KRISHNA? I HAD LEFT HIM HERE!
OH! HE IS SAFE. BUT... WHO IS THIS WOMAN? WHY IS SHE LYING HERE?
I SAW HER NURSING KRISHNA.
THEN SHE MUST BE PUTANA! PUTANA THE BABY-KILLER. SHE HAS KILLED MANY BABIES IN MATHURA.
SHE IS DEAD! THE EVIL PUTANA IS DEAD!
KRISHNA WAS SAFE, AND LIFE IN GOKUL WENT ON AS BEFORE.



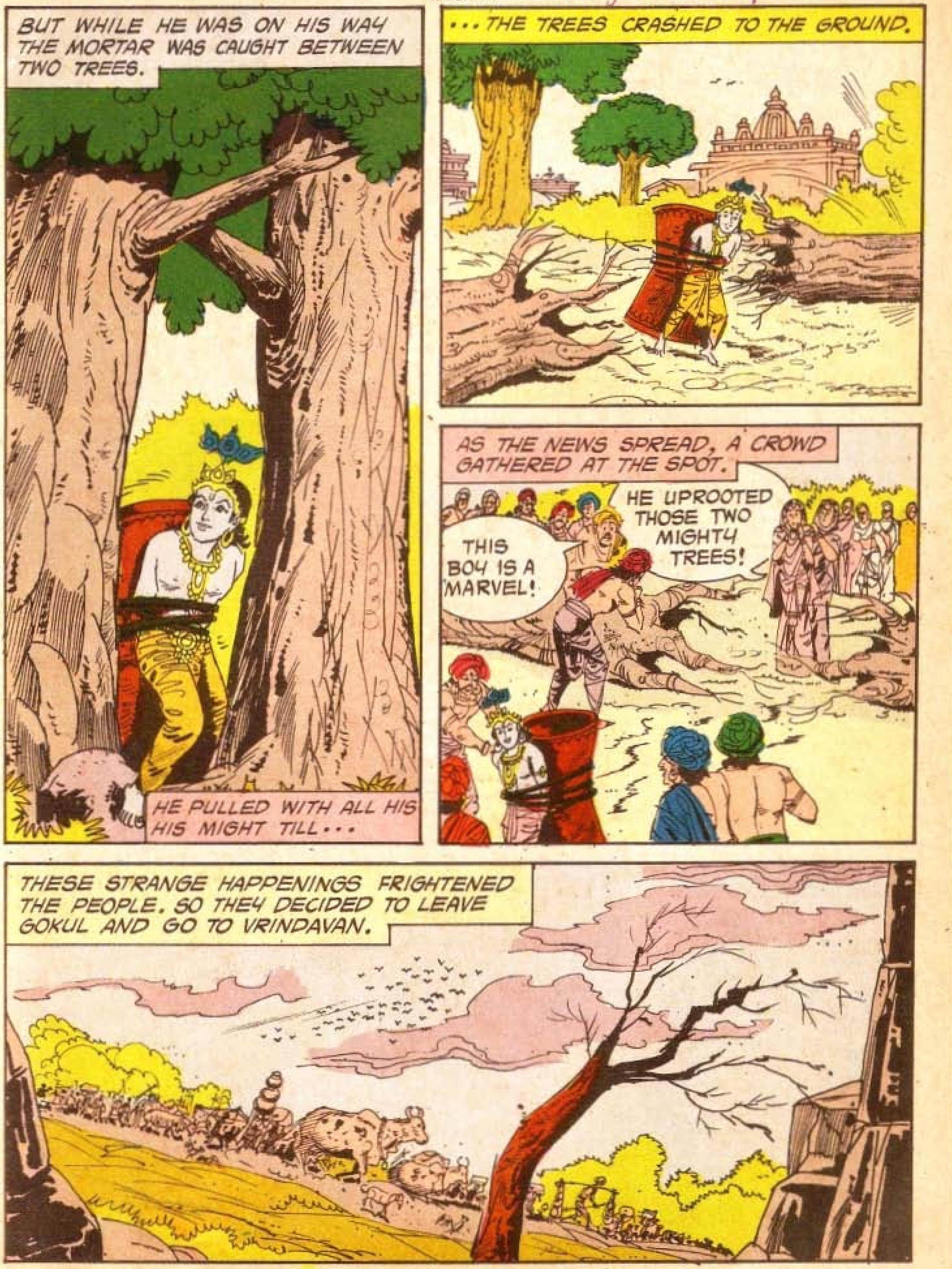
*DEVAKI'S SEVENTH CHILD, LOOKED AFTER BY ROHINI


KRISHNA TIPTOED INTO A NEARBY HOUSE...
...AND WENT STRAIGHT TO THE POTS OF BUTTER. SUDDENLY—
YOU NAUGHTY BOY! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
SHE DRAGGED KRISHNA TO YASHODA.
KRISHNA HAS EATEN ALL THE BUTTER IN MY HOUSE.
BUT...
MY KRISHNA DID THAT? I DON'T BELIEVE IT. WHY, I GAVE HIM A WHOLE POT OF BUTTER ONLY A SHORT WHILE AGO.
SISTER, YOU MUST KEEP THE MILK AND BUTTER BEYOND THE REACH OF CHILDREN.

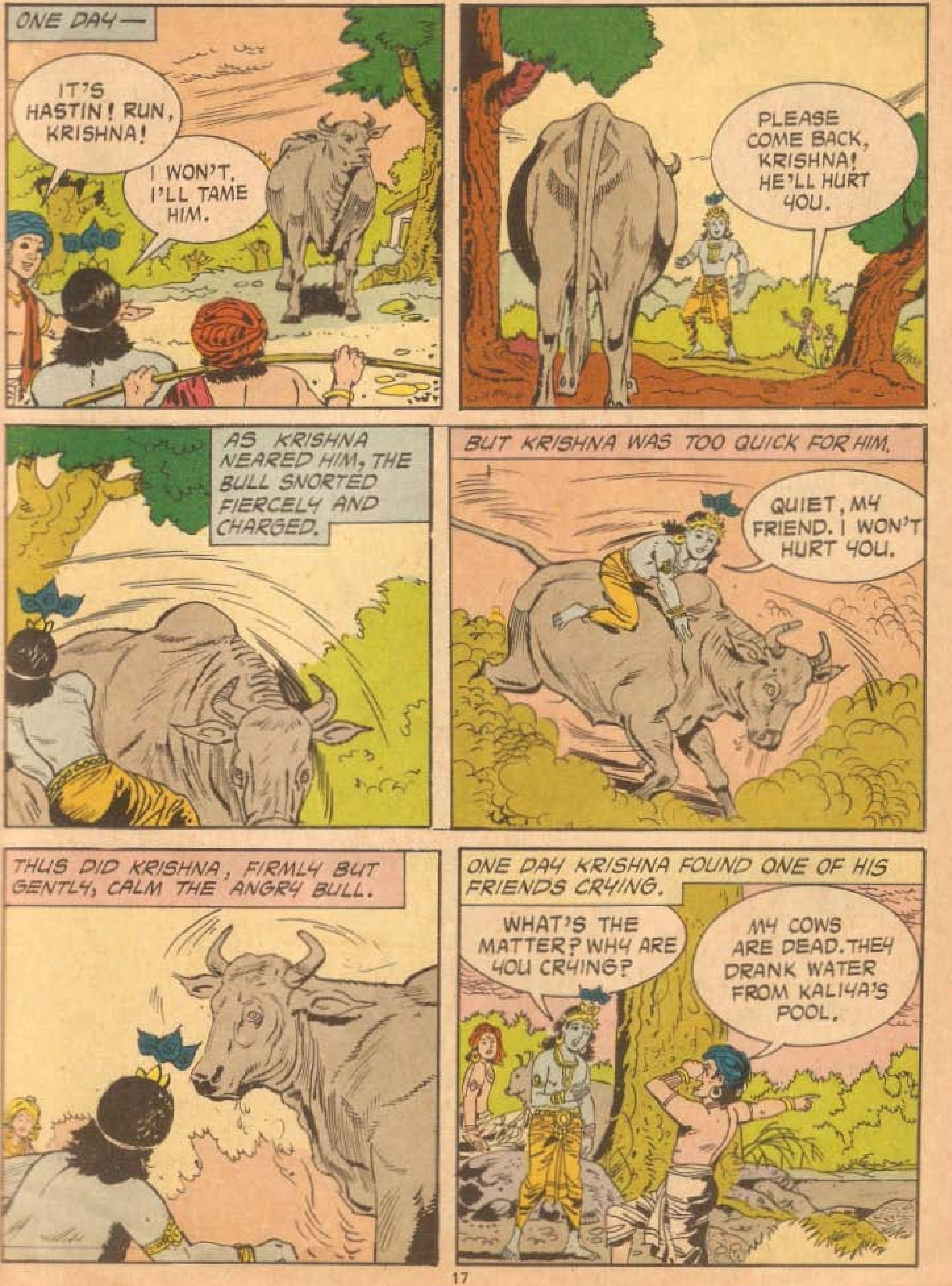

THE GOPIKAS, AS THE WOMEN OF GOKUL WERE CALLED, TOOK YASHODA'S ADVICE. BUT KRISHNA WAS TOO CLEVER FOR THEM.
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
I HAVE AN IDEA.
SUCH WERE THE PRANKS KRISHNA PLAYED AND YASHODA FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO HANDLE THE COMPLAINTS THAT POURED IN.
YASHODA! KRISHNA WAS DRINKING THE MILK STRAIGHT FROM MY COW!
BUT MOTHER, THE COW GAVE IT TO ME.

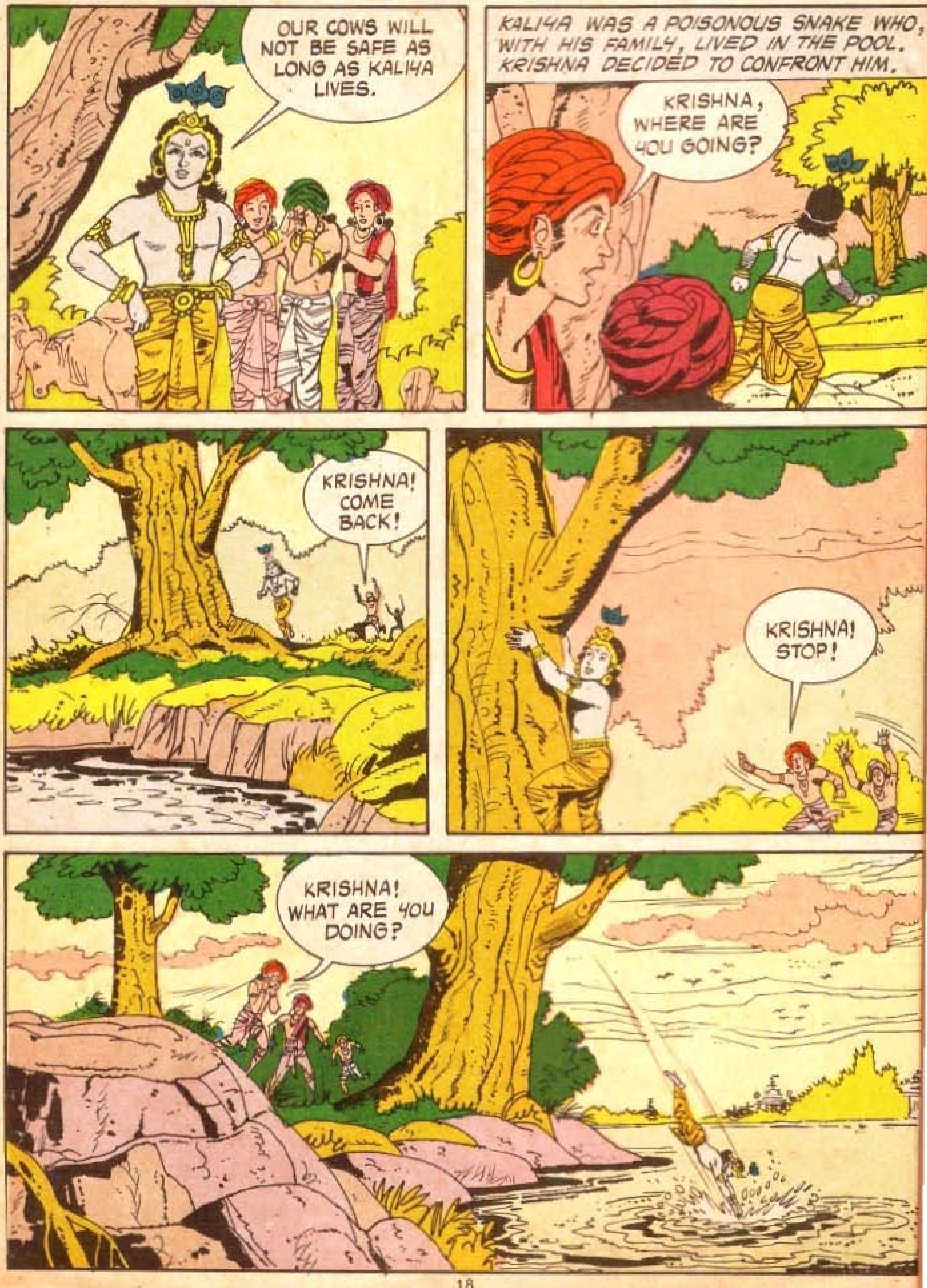

AND THE BUTTER ON YOUR FACE? WHO GAVE THAT TO YOU?
THE GWALA BOYS SMEARED IT ON MY FACE. ALL OUT OF SPITE.
LOOK, MOTHER! I AM SO SHORT. THE BUTTER POT IS KEPT SO HIGH. HOW COULD I REACH IT?
KRISHNA, YOU ARE BECOMING NAUGHTIER DAY BY DAY. I WILL HAVE TO PUNISH YOU!
SO SHE TIED KRISHNA TO A HEAVY MORTAR.
BALARAMA WILL UNTIE ME. I'LL GO TO HIM.

 Debangshu Banerjee

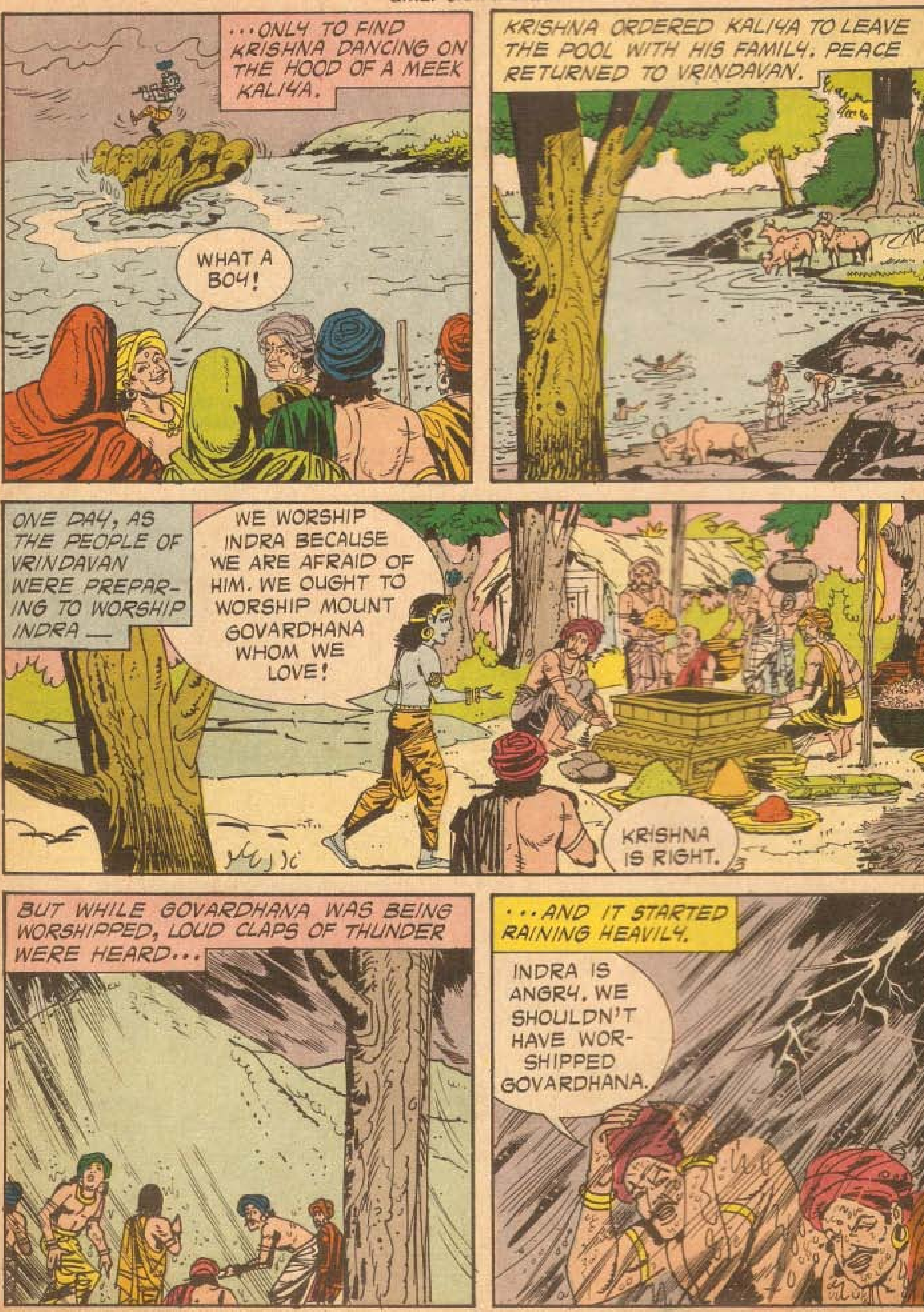



AT VRINDAVAN—
MOTHER, MAY I GO WITH THE OTHERS TO GRAZE THE CATTLE?
YOU MAY, IF YOU STAY BY BALARAMA'S SIDE.
IN THE EVENING—
KRISHNA, WE ARE TOO TIRED TO HERD THE CATTLE.
WELL, THEN, I'LL HERD THEM FROM HERE.
KRISHNA TOOK UP HIS FLUTE.
SUCH SWEET MUSIC!
LOOK AT THE COWS!
THE GOPIKAS STOPPED THEIR CHORES TO LISTEN TO THE MELODIOUS STRAINS OF KRISHNA'S FLUTE.
HIS MUSIC FILLS ME WITH A STRANGE YEARNING.


ONE DAY —
IT'S HASTIN! RUN, KRISHNA!
I WON'T. I'LL TAME HIM.
PLEASE COME BACK, KRISHNA! HE'LL HURT YOU.
AS KRISHNA NEARED HIM, THE BULL SNORTED FIERCELY AND CHARGED.
BUT KRISHNA WAS TOO QUICK FOR HIM.
QUIET, MY FRIEND. I WON'T HURT YOU.
THUS DID KRISHNA, FIRMLY BUT GENTLY, CALM THE ANGRY BULL.
ONE DAY KRISHNA FOUND ONE OF HIS FRIENDS CRYING.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
MY COWS ARE DEAD. THEY DRANK WATER FROM KALIYA'S POOL.

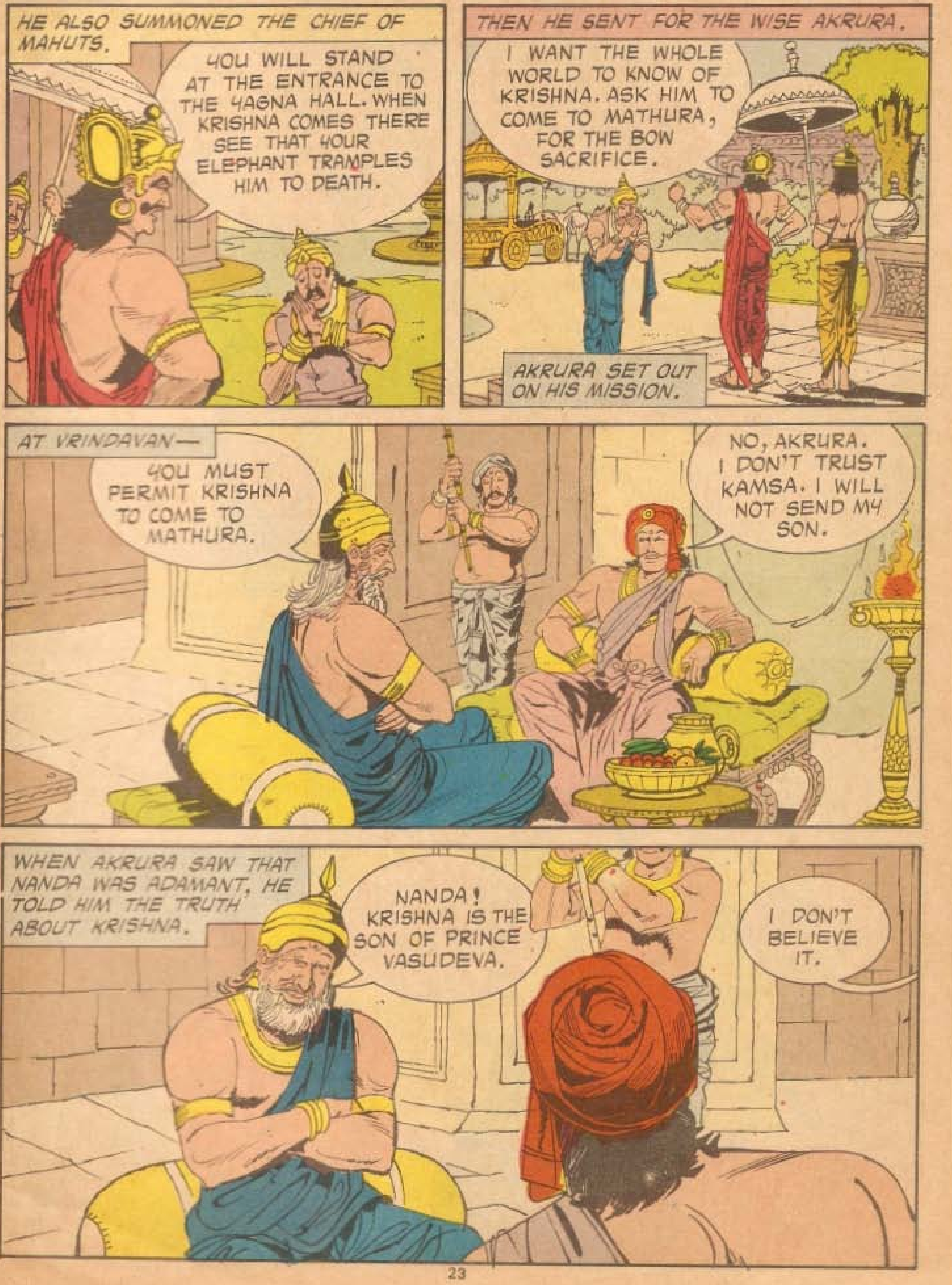

OUR COWS WILL NOT BE SAFE AS LONG AS KALIYA LIVES.
KALIYA WAS A POISONOUS SNAKE WHO, WITH HIS FAMILY, LIVED IN THE POOL. KRISHNA DECIDED TO CONFRONT HIM.
KRISHNA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
KRISHNA! COME BACK!
KRISHNA! STOP!
KRISHNA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?


KRISHNA! KRISHNA! PLEASE COME BACK! KALIYA WILL KILL YOU!
BUT KRISHNA DIDN'T TURN BACK.
KRISHNA HAS DISAPPEARED. RUN AND TELL NANDA.
AS THE NEWS SPREAD, PEOPLE RUSHED TO THE POOL...


...ONLY TO FIND KRISHNA DANCING ON THE HOOD OF A MEEK KALIYA.
WHAT A BOY!
KRISHNA ORDERED KALIYA TO LEAVE THE POOL WITH HIS FAMILY. PEACE RETURNED TO VRINDAVAN.
ONE DAY, AS THE PEOPLE OF VRINDAVAN WERE PREPARING TO WORSHIP INDRA —
WE WORSHIP INDRA BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID OF HIM. WE OUGHT TO WORSHIP MOUNT GOVARDHANA WHOM WE LOVE!
KRISHNA IS RIGHT.
BUT WHILE GOVARDHANA WAS BEING WORSHIPPED, LOUD CLAPS OF THUNDER WERE HEARD...
...AND IT STARTED RAINING HEAVILY.
INDRA IS ANGRY. WE SHOULDN'T HAVE WORSHIPPED GOVARDHANA.


COME MY PEOPLE, FOLLOW ME.
SUDDENLY A RUMBLING SOUND WAS HEARD.
GOVARDHANA IS MOVING!
LOOK! IT'S RISING!
BRING YOUR CATTLE WITH YOU AND TAKE SHELTER. IT IS DRY HERE.
IT'S A MIRACLE! KRISHNA IS HOLDING THE MIGHTY GOVARDHANA ON HIS LITTLE FINGER!
KRISHNA SHELTERED THEM FOR SEVEN DAYS AND SEVEN NIGHTS TILL INDRA'S FURY WAS SPENT.


WHEN NEWS OF KRISHNA'S DEEDS REACHED MATHURA—
PRADYOTA! I HEAR THAT KRISHNA HELD THE MIGHTY GOVARDHANA ON HIS LITTLE FINGER.
SO THEY SAY, MY LORD!
YOU FOOL! WHY HAVE YOU LET HIM LIVE SO LONG? DIDN'T I ORDER YOU TO HAVE HIM KILLED SOMEHOW?
I HAVE TRIED EVERYTHING. EVEN THE MAD BULL, ARISHTA, AND THE WILD HORSE, KESHI.
KAMSA WAS SILENT FOR A WHILE. THEN—
HAVE IT ANNOUNCED THAT IN A FORTNIGHT I WILL PERFORM THE BOW SACRIFICE...
...AND... INVITE ALL, INCLUDING KRISHNA. YOU MUST SEE TO IT THAT HE DOES NOT RETURN ALIVE.
WHEN PRADYOTA LEFT, KAMSA SENT FOR CHANURA.
CHANURA! IF KRISHNA IS NOT KILLED BY PRADYOTA, CHALLENGE HIM TO A MATCH AND DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE ALIVE.

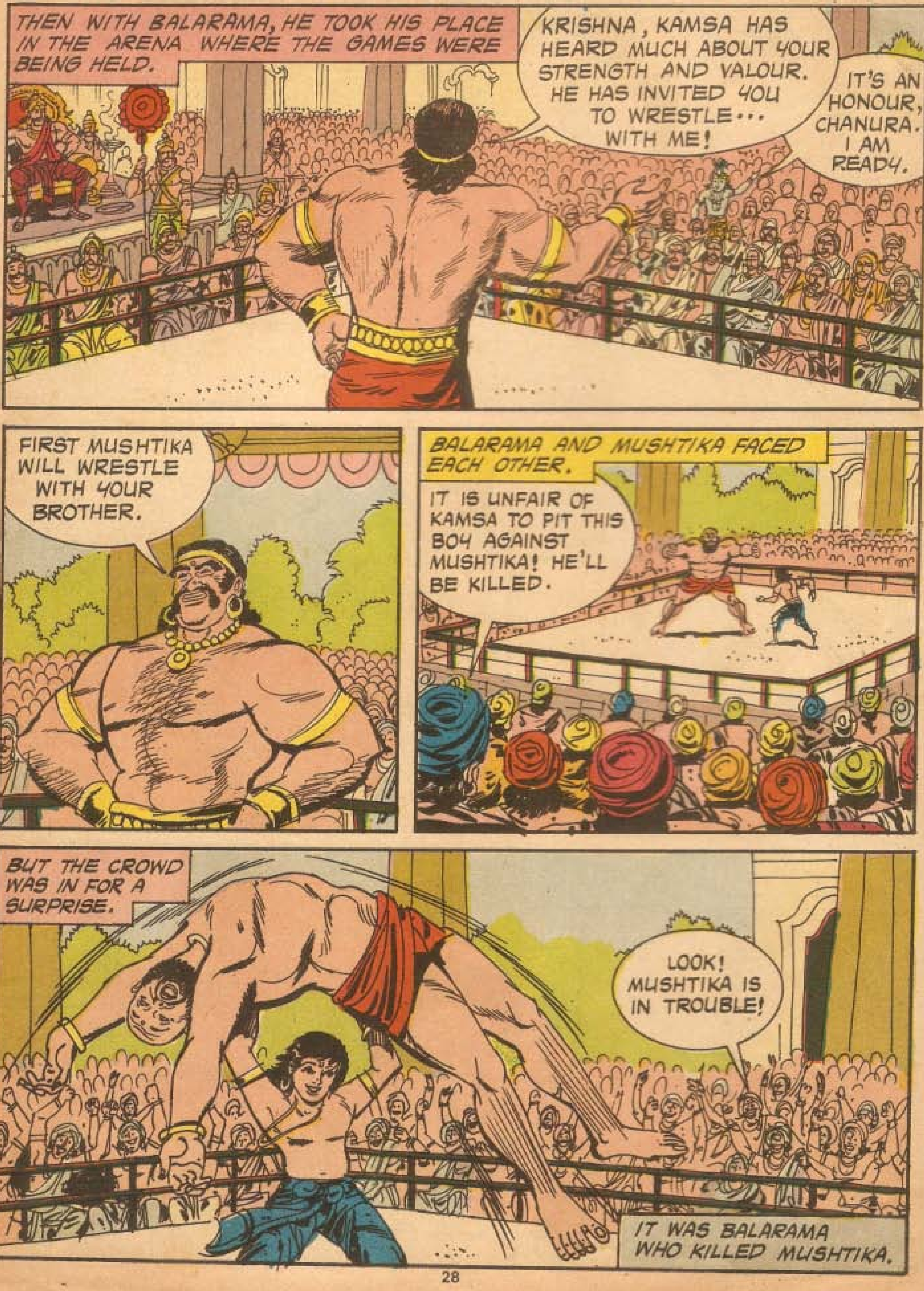

HE ALSO SUMMONED THE CHIEF OF MAHUTS.
YOU WILL STAND AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE YAGNA HALL. WHEN KRISHNA COMES THERE SEE THAT YOUR ELEPHANT TRAMPLES HIM TO DEATH.
THEN HE SENT FOR THE WISE AKRURA.
I WANT THE WHOLE WORLD TO KNOW OF KRISHNA. ASK HIM TO COME TO MATHURA, FOR THE BOW SACRIFICE.
AKRURA SET OUT ON HIS MISSION.
AT VRINDAVAN—
YOU MUST PERMIT KRISHNA TO COME TO MATHURA.
NO, AKRURA. I DON'T TRUST KAMSA. I WILL NOT SEND MY SON.
WHEN AKRURA SAW THAT NANDA WAS ADAMANT, HE TOLD HIM THE TRUTH ABOUT KRISHNA.
NANDA! KRISHNA IS THE SON OF PRINCE VASUDEVA.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

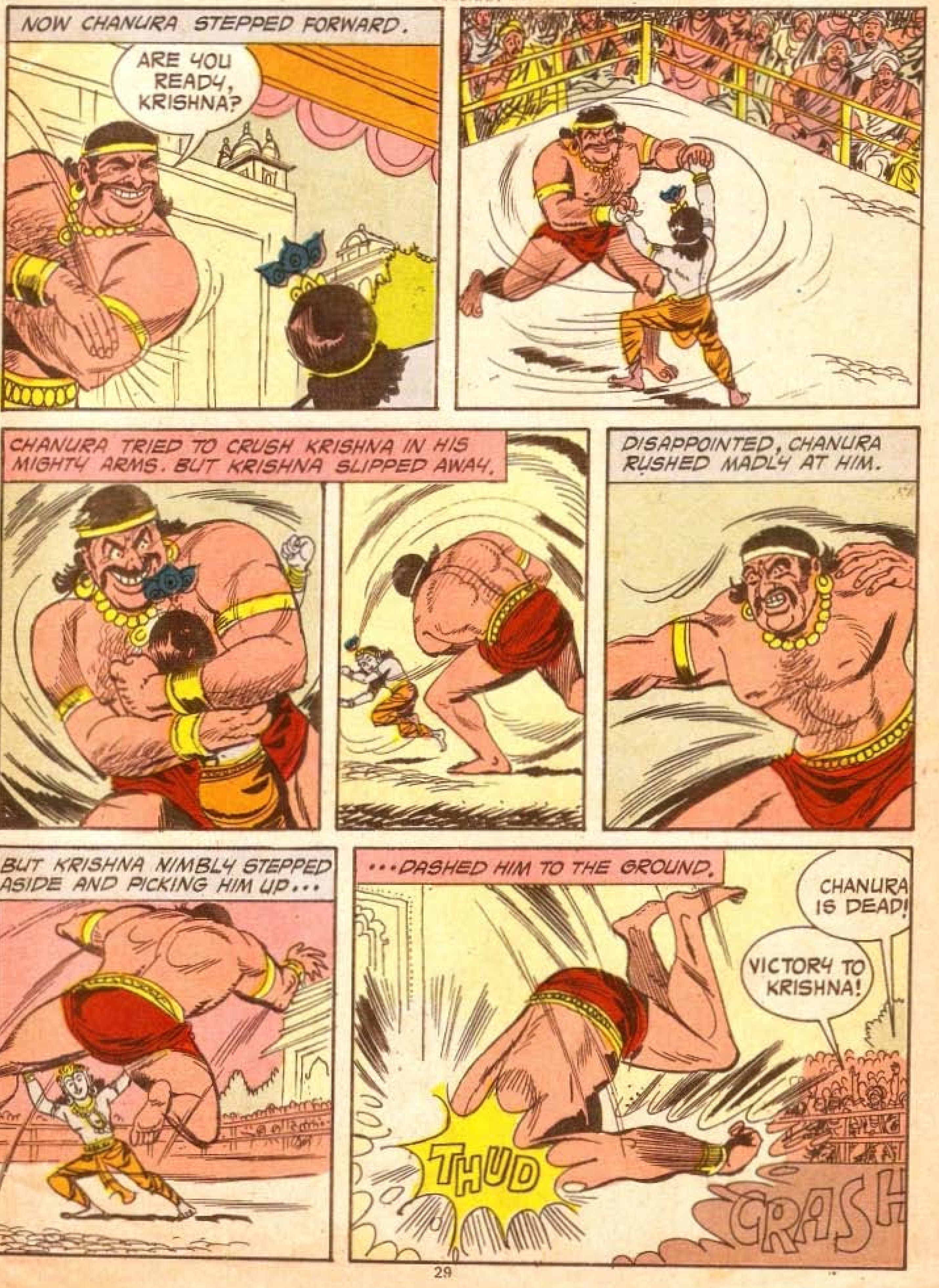

SO AKRURA NARRATED THE STORY OF KRISHNA'S BIRTH AND HOW HE WAS BROUGHT TO GOKUL.
KRISHNA, DID YOU HEAR THAT? AKRURA SAYS THAT DEVAKI IS YOUR MOTHER. I AM YOUR MOTHER, AREN'T I?
PLEASE DON'T BE UPSET, MOTHER. I SHALL ALWAYS LOOK UPON YOU AS MY MOTHER. BUT...
...I SEEK THE PERMISSION OF MY ELDERS TO GO TO MATHURA!
VERY GOOD, MY BOY! THE YADAVA CHIEFS WILL SEE THAT NO HARM COMES TO YOU.
YOU MAY GO, MY SON. BUT BEWARE OF KAMSA.
THE NEXT MORNING, KRISHNA, ACCOMPANIED BY BALARAMA, LEFT FOR MATHURA.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES, CHILDREN.
AND COME BACK SOON.

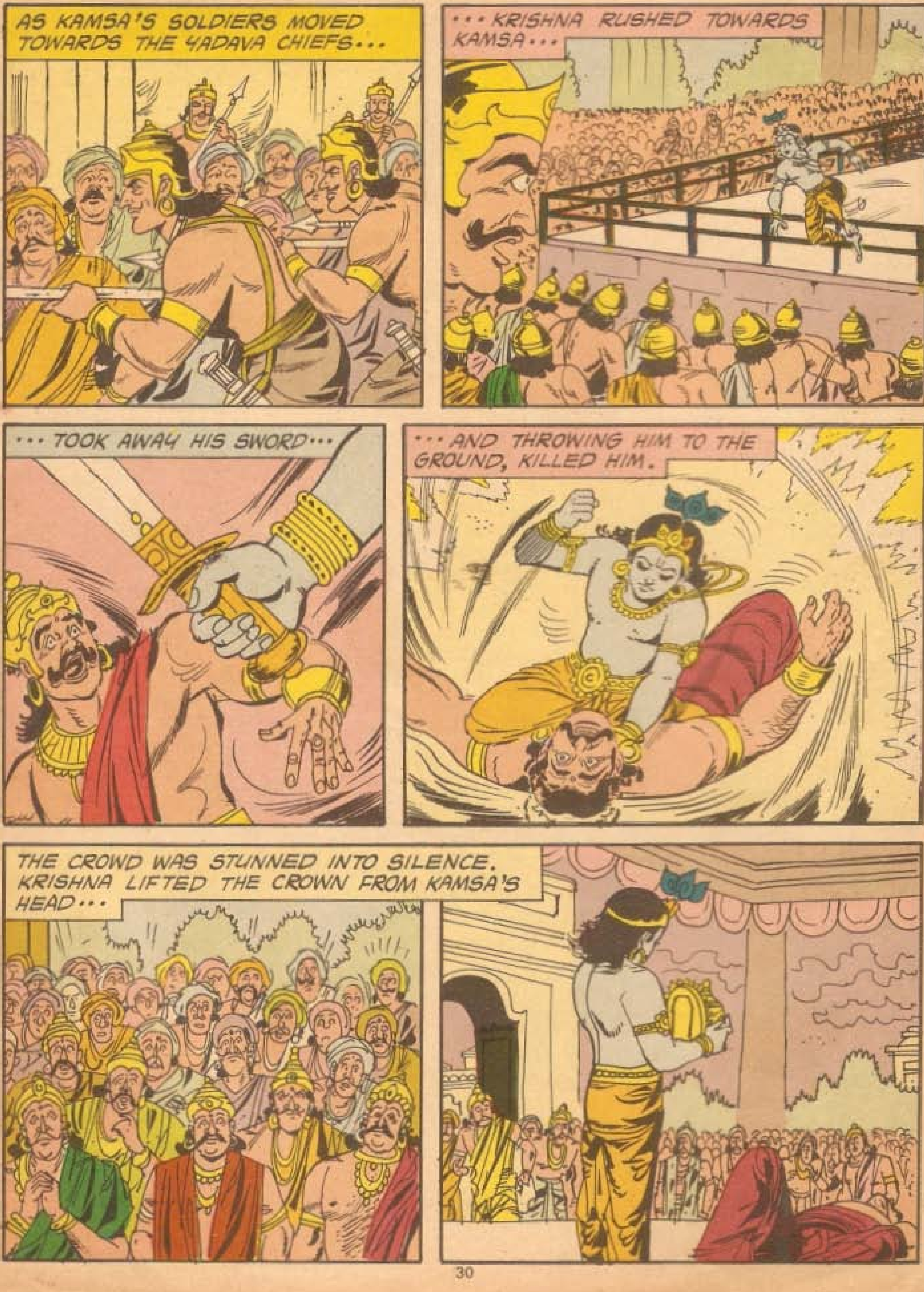

AS THEY NEARED THE CITY OF MATHURA, KRISHNA DECIDED TO WALK. SUDDENLY—
RISE, O WOMAN! WHY DO YOU FALL AT MY FEET?
LOOK AT TRIVAKRA! HER HUMPED BACK HAS STRAIGHTENED OUT.
A MIRACLE! HE MUST BE OUR SAVIOUR.
THE NEWS SPREAD AND A CROWD FOLLOWED KRISHNA AND BALARAMA TO THE GATE OF THE YAGNA HALL.
SIR, I AM KRISHNA. MAY I INSPECT THE BOW?
CERTAINLY! DO STEP IN.
IT WAS PRADYOTA.
SO THIS IS THE BOY I HAVE TO KILL.
IS THIS THE BOW? IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY HEAVY.
BUT IT IS! EVEN THE MIGHTY WRESTLER CHANURA CANNOT LIFT IT.
I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT IS THAT HEAVY.


KRISHNA LIFTED THE BOW...
...AND BROKE IT.
THE JUBILANT CROWD RUSHED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL HALL.
VICTORY TO KRISHNA! HE IS THE SAVIOUR!
WHEN PRADYOTA WENT TO KAMSA WITH THE NEWS—
KRISHNA BROKE THE BOW AND YOU STOOD AND WATCHED HIM DO IT!
YOU HAD ORDERS TO KILL HIM, HADN'T YOU?
I KNOW, MY LORD! BUT THE CROWD THAT FOLLOWED HIM WAS FRIGHTEN-ING.


THE NEXT MORNING AS KRISHNA APPROACHED THE GATE OF THE YAGNA HALL —
WATCH OUT, KRISHNA! THE ELEPHANT...!
THE ELEPHANT SEIZED KRISHNA.
BUT KRISHNA ESCAPED ITS GRIP, LIFTED IT BY ITS TRUNK...
...AND HURLING IT INTO THE AIR...
...KILLED IT.


THEN WITH BALARAMA, HE TOOK HIS PLACE IN THE ARENA WHERE THE GAMES WERE BEING HELD.
KRISHNA, KAMSA HAS HEARD MUCH ABOUT YOUR STRENGTH AND VALOUR. HE HAS INVITED YOU TO WRESTLE... WITH ME!
IT'S AN HONOUR, CHANURA. I AM READY.
FIRST MUSHTIKA WILL WRESTLE WITH YOUR BROTHER.
BALARAMA AND MUSHTIKA FACED EACH OTHER.
IT IS UNFAIR OF KAMSA TO PIT THIS BOY AGAINST MUSHTIKA! HE'LL BE KILLED.
BUT THE CROWD WAS IN FOR A SURPRISE.
LOOK! MUSHTIKA IS IN TROUBLE!
IT WAS BALARAMA WHO KILLED MUSHTIKA.


NOW CHANURA STEPPED FORWARD.
ARE YOU READY, KRISHNA?
CHANURA TRIED TO CRUSH KRISHNA IN HIS MIGHTY ARMS. BUT KRISHNA SLIPPED AWAY.
DISAPPOINTED, CHANURA RUSHED MADLY AT HIM.
BUT KRISHNA NIMBLY STEPPED ASIDE AND PICKING HIM UP...
...DASHED HIM TO THE GROUND.
CHANURA IS DEAD!
VICTORY TO KRISHNA!
THUD
CRASH


AS KAMSA'S SOLDIERS MOVED TOWARDS THE YADAVA CHIEFS...
...KRISHNA RUSHED TOWARDS KAMSA...
...TOOK AWAY HIS SWORD...
...AND THROWING HIM TO THE GROUND, KILLED HIM.
THE CROWD WAS STUNNED INTO SILENCE. KRISHNA LIFTED THE CROWN FROM KAMSA'S HEAD...


...AND BEGAN WALKING TOWARDS THE PALACE.
HE WALKED PAST THE GUARDS...
...AND WENT UP TO UGRASENA, KAMSA'S FATHER.
MY LORD!
KRISHNA!
MY LORD! I HAVE BROUGHT YOU WHAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO YOU.
THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING. KRISHNA LIVED LONG TO TRIUMPH OVER ALL EVIL. HIS GREAT DEEDS ARE REMEMBERED TO THIS DAY.

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT



AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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- who care for children
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- for whom Chitra Katha is more a vehicle of education than a business.

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